

week. They are claiming the exact same number can either be a total catastrophe or a smashing success. I guess it depends on whether Democrats are in power. So much for science without politics.

Here is how the Washington Post put it:

The accelerating speed of the [vaccine] program undercuts assertions by some Biden advisers that they were left no plan by the Trump administration, and suggests they need only to keep their feet on the pedal to clear the bar they set for themselves.

Yesterday, Mr. Becerra was asked about increasing vaccinations in the months ahead. Here is what he said: "I first have to be sworn in to give you a timeline." Perhaps that is like the time the Speaker of the House famously said she had to pass a bill before the public could learn what was in it.

The new administration campaigned heavily on having a new master plan to fight the pandemic. Well, now they are in office, President Biden has said: "[T]here's nothing we can do to change the trajectory of the pandemic in the next several months," and his administration is apparently content to maintain the same vaccine pace they actually inherited.

Let's talk about Congress's role in the pandemic relief. Our Democratic colleagues spent last summer and fall using the legislative filibuster to delay the next rescue package until after the election. Now, that would be the same tool that some Senate Democrats now suddenly say they oppose, as if they hadn't leaned on it liberally over the last 6 years.

But, finally, last month, they let us act. We passed another package totaling nearly \$900 billion in urgent relief. We provided more than \$80 billion to help K-12 schools, \$280 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program, billions more for Federal unemployment insurance supplements, nutrition and rental assistance, and direct cash aid and massive new investments in purchasing and distributing vaccines. Some of that money has already gone out the door. Other portions are still unspent—a massive, historic, almost trillion-dollar package that was passed into law just 5 weeks ago.

Since last March, Washington, DC, has spent a historic amount of money standing up one of the most enormous policy responses by any government to any emergency that the world has ever seen. Nobody thinks the support has been perfect—far from it—but it has been historic and strong.

For example, a nonpartisan study in November showed that because of the historic emergency legislation passed through Congress, American personal income was actually—listen to this—higher in September than it had been before the pandemic.

Last month, Larry Summers, President Clinton's Treasury Secretary and President Obama's NEC Director, confirmed that relative to our underlying

economy, our multiple rescue packages have brought American household income all the way back to a level that equals or even exceeds what he would expect if we weren't in a crisis.

So, to be clear, nobody thinks our bipartisan work fighting this pandemic is completely finished. Nobody is arguing that. And we all understand that overall national statistics do not explain away the terrible struggles facing many families. But experts and economists from the left to the right agree: Any further action should be smart and targeted, not just an imprecise deluge of borrowed money that would direct huge sums toward those who don't need it.

That is why the new administration's first draft of their sprawling proposal misses the mark, and press reports make clear this is not just a Republican view. Multiple Democratic Senators agree that it is not the right path forward.

So as the \$900 billion package from 5 weeks ago continues to come online and as the remaining needs continue to come into focus, Republicans will be ready and eager to continue bipartisan discussions about smart steps forward for the American people. Bipartisan action helped our Nation endure the last year. Bipartisan action helped us turn the corner, and it will be smart, bipartisan actions that help us finish the fight.

NOMINATION OF JANET LOUISE YELLEN

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, now on a related matter, this afternoon, the Senate will confirm Dr. Janet Yellen, the former Chair of the Federal Reserve, to serve as President Biden's Secretary of the Treasury. Her speedy confirmation will contrast sharply with the way the Senate Democratic minority handled many of the last President's key Cabinet nominations 4 years ago.

Secretary Mnuchin had to sit through a stunt where Senate Democrats literally boycotted his committee hearing. He was not confirmed until mid-February.

Dr. Yellen came out of committee on a unanimous vote and will begin to work 5 days after the inauguration. That is even faster than Secretary Geithner's nomination in 2009 in the teeth of a financial crisis.

This certainly isn't because Dr. Yellen's or President Biden's economic policy views have unanimous support here in the Senate. I expect we will have no shortage of spirited policy discussions with Dr. Yellen in the months ahead, especially if some Democrats keep trying to use this historic emergency as a pretext—a pretext to push through permanent far-left policy changes.

The 50 Senators on our side have great confidence in our pro-job, pro-worker vision that helped build the greatest job market in living memory.

But the simple fact is that, when the American people elect a President and when the President selects qualified and mainstream people for key posts, the whole Nation deserves for them to be able to assemble their team.

I will be voting to confirm Dr. Yellen today. I look forward to working together on pro-growth policies that will help rebuild the thriving economy for American workers that was in place just 1 year ago.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Janet Louise Yellen, of California, to be Secretary of the Treasury.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. McCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO CAPITOL CUSTODIAL STAFF

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, it is good to see the Senator from Hawaii as the Presiding Officer.

Madam President, I rise today to honor workers in this building—something that Senator HIRONO does every day of her life in this job—workers in this building who are too often overlooked but whose work is essential to the functioning of our government: our Capitol custodial staff.

In the days after the January 6 insurrection, when domestic terrorists stormed this building, we rightly honored Capitol Police Officer Eugene Goodman and many other Capitol police officers who put their lives on the line to protect all of us, to protect our democratic process, and, essentially, to protect our democracy.

Last week, I joined a bipartisan group of colleagues in introducing legislation to award Officer Goodman the

Congressional Gold Medal. He and others may well have saved our lives and protected our democracy. They did it without the support they needed from their leadership. They did it without the support from the Trump White House on down.

But those officers aren't the only ones who deserve our honor and our gratitude. They are not the only ones who put their lives on the line serving our country on January 6 or over the past year during this pandemic.

Every day, Capitol custodial staff do their jobs with skill, dedication, and dignity. They showed up for work during this pandemic even when many in this building didn't take it seriously and put those workers' health at risk by not wearing masks.

Capitol custodial workers were here on January 6, doing their jobs, when White supremacists stormed this building, barging into this Chamber, acting as though no one could ever possibly hold them accountable. Because the President was on their side, they thought they were invulnerable.

And when their rampage was over, it was largely the Black and Brown custodians who were left to restore dignity and respect to the Capitol. Their work allowed us to continue ours that night: certifying the electoral votes, securing the election and our democracy.

Many Americans were so moved to see those workers still doing their jobs. That is what service looks like. That is what love of country looks like. That is what the dignity of work is all about.

Unfortunately, it tells you a whole lot about the problems that have been allowed to fester for too long in this country: White supremacists make a mess; Black workers clean it up.

We have a lot of work to do to fix that and to ensure that hard work pays off for all workers in this country. We simply don't value and respect all work the way we should.

I think of the words of Dr. King, who, as you know, died fighting for workers, sanitation workers in Memphis. He said:

If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, "Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well."

Dr. King said:

No work is insignificant. All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance.

No work is insignificant. All labor has dignity. We ought to treat it that way, starting with honoring these workers.

In the days after January 6, pictures of Capitol workers cleaning up after these terrorists were reported on the news, captured by dedicated journalists who also risked their lives to do their jobs that day. These photos struck a chord with so many people. Americans began writing thank-you letters, send-

ing them to the Architect of the Capitol to pass on to custodial staff, to police officers, and to others.

Many of these workers are represented by AFSCME Local 626, which gives workers a voice on the job and is also working on ways to honor its members.

Members of Congress should do the same. In the coming weeks, I will be introducing a Senate resolution to recognize the Capitol custodial staff for their bravery and their service to our country on January 6. I hope my colleagues will join me—all of them—not as Republicans or Democrats but as Members of this body, as Americans all.

This Capitol is the people's House. The insurrectionists ransacked it. The Capitol custodians picked up the pieces. They deserve our eternal gratitude. To all the Capitol custodians who come to work in this building each day to ensure our democracy functions, thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOMINATION OF JANET LOUISE YELLEN

Madam President, a few days after our first woman Vice President was sworn in, we are about to confirm the first woman to step into one of the leading roles in our economy. Janet Yellen made history when she served as Chair of the Federal Reserve. She is about to make history again as Secretary of the Treasury.

She will be the first person ever to have held all three of the top positions in our economy—Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, Chair of the Federal Reserve, and Secretary of the Treasury—and now more than ever, we need her leadership, her vision, and her appreciation for what makes this country work.

As Fed Chair and as a labor economist, Janet Yellen made it clear that she understands what drives our economy. It is not the stock market. It is not Wall Street. It is people. It is workers. Janet Yellen knows our economy is built by Americans who know the dignity of a hard day's work, whether you punch a clock or swipe a badge or work for tips or care for children or take care of your parents.

I remember in 2015 Chair Yellen came to Cleveland and toured the Alcoa plant not far from my house. She showed the kind of leadership we need, the kind of leaders President Biden is putting into the top jobs managing our economy—people who will get out of Washington, who will visit every sort of community in the heart of the country, and people who act on what they learn from workers in Chillicothe, in Springfield, in Youngstown and Moline, IL, where the next Presiding Officer comes from.

There is a lot more to our economy than a quarterly earnings report. Janet Yellen understands that. She will step into this job at a time when the contrast between the financial health of corporations and workers couldn't be starker.

We are in the midst of a public health crisis and an economic crisis. You

wouldn't know it if you looked only at the stock market or corporate profits. But under President Biden, under Janet Yellen, and under new leadership in the Senate, we are done measuring—we are just done measuring the economy that way. We are going to think about the economy the way workers and their families do—in terms of paychecks, whether they can make rent or pay the mortgage this month or afford childcare or pay for their prescription drugs. By those measures, people are hurting.

We hear a lot about what some people call the K-shaped recovery—that is one way of saying that the rich are getting richer while the middle class and low-income families continue to struggle. It was a problem before this virus, as you know. The pandemic has only made it worse, and it is layered on top of systemic racism and inequalities that have been allowed to fester for too long.

We have a tax code that favors the wealthy, that gives corporations a tax break when they move manufacturing jobs out of East St. Louis or out of East Cleveland overseas. Americans' hard-earned savings are at risk from the financial instability of climate change. China is aggressive, confident, and continues to threaten American jobs. The Internal Revenue Service wastes time and taxpayer money auditing working families, often Black and Brown families, instead of going after wealthy tax cheats. Wall Street rewards corporations that lay off employees and cut their pay and treat their workers as expendable. Risky behavior on Wall Street—like it did in the last crisis—can devastate communities in Ohio and around the country.

I have confidence that Janet Yellen understands these vast challenges and that she will get to work immediately to take them on and to create a better, more prosperous, more stable economy, centered on the dignity of work. She knows we can build new, cleaner infrastructure that puts people to work at good-paying union jobs. We can invest in the country, including the small towns and industrial cities of Southeast Ohio and Southern Illinois and the Black and Brown communities in our cities that too often get left behind. We can make it easier for people to afford housing and transportation and childcare. We can create a tax code that rewards work instead of wealth, starting with a dramatic expansion of the child tax credit and the earned income tax credit. We can give people more power over their lives and their own money with options like monthly distribution of the child tax credit and no-fee bank accounts. That is the vision Janet Yellen and Joe Biden and Senate Democrats are committed to—one where the middle class is growing and everyone has the opportunity to join it.

Janet Yellen has the experience, the talent, and the commitment to service to deliver results. She is the right person for these tumultuous times. She